1. **National Food Security Mission (NFSM)**: The National Development Council on 29th May, 2007 adopted a resolution to launch a Centrally Sponsored Scheme, Food Security Mission. NFSM has been launched in 312 identified districts of 17 States from Rabi 2007-08. The NFSM, *inter alia*, covers Pulses. Its target is to increase production of pulses by 2 million tonnes by the end of the Eleventh Five Year Plan.

2. **Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana**: A new State Plan scheme of Additional Central Assistance(ACA) for Agriculture & Allied Sectors namely Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) has been launched during 2007-08 with an outlay of Rs.25,000 crore for the 11th Five Year Plan to enhance investment in agriculture and allied sectors. The broad objective of the scheme is to incentivize the States to increase public investment to achieve 4% growth rate in Agriculture and allied sectors in the Eleventh Five Year Plan.

3. **Integrated Scheme of Oilseeds, Pulses, Oilpalm & Maize (ISOPOM)**: ISOPOM is implemented in 14 major Oilseeds and Pulses growing States *viz;* Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. Under ISOPOM, assistance is given to the States to encourage farmers to grow pulses on a large scale.

4. **Increased Budgetary Outlay**: The actual expenditure on Agriculture and allied sector was Rs 22,000 crore in the Tenth Plan. Government has increased the Central Government outlay on Agriculture and allied sector to Rs 87,000 crore in Eleventh Plan.

Absorption of porters/coolies as fourth grade employees

*106. SHRIMATI HEMA MALINI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government has decided that porters/coolies would be absorbed as fourth grade employees;

(b) if so, whether they would be given the scale of fourth grade employees; and

(c) if so, whether passengers would not be required to pay porters/coolies?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PRASAD): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Licensed Porters/coolies after being appointed as Gangmen do not perform the job of licensed porters/coolies. Instead, they would be performing duties attached to the post of Gangman. Handling of passenger's luggage is done by licensed porters/coolies on the stations and they will have to be paid by the passengers as per the notified rates.

Deficit in rainfall in certain areas

*107. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Peninsular India was facing deficit in rainfall from South-West Monsoon during the period 15 June – 15 July;

(b) if so, whether there are areas where deficit has been more than 40 per cent and whether in those areas there has been no sowing or the seeds sown have not germinated;

(c) whether the situation was aggravated by the very poor prospects of monsoon rains reviving in these areas before August; and

(d) if so, whether Government has sent teams to the affected States to assess the 'scarcity' conditions prevalent and to make an estimate of relief funds that would be needed to tackle the emergency?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) to (d) As reported by India Meteorological Department (IMD), during the period 15th June, 2008 to 15th July, 2008, all the meteorological sub-divisions in South Peninsula were deficient in rainfall, except Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Lakshadweep. The rainfall position in these sub-divisions improved thereafter. The percentage departure of rainfall from normal, in respect of these sub-divisions, during South-West Monsoon 2008, upto 16.7.2008, 30.7.2008, 13.8.2008 and 30.9.2008, as reported by the IMD, is indicated below:-

Sl.	Meteorological Sub-	% Departure of rainfall from normal			
		1.6.2008 to 16.7.2008	1.6.2008 to 30.7.2008	1.6.2008 to 13.8.2008	1.6.2008 to 30.9.2008
1.	Coastal Andhra Pradesh	-32	-5	+22	+4
2.	Telangana	-33	-20	+20	+4
3.	Rayalaseema	-30	-13	-11	+2
4.	Tamil Nadu & Pondicherry	-12	+9	-1	+3
5.	Coastal Karnataka	-29	-29	-16	-16
6.	North Interior Karnataka	-50	-39	-18	-12
7.	South Interior Karnataka	-25	-10	+7	+9
8.	Kerala	-41	-33	-27	-22
9.	Madhya Maharashtra	-41	-38	-13	+8
10.	Marathwada	-65	-48	-37	-17
11.	Vidarbha	-36	-17	-10	-20
12.	Lakshadweep	-15	+2	-7	-5

The status of sowing of various crops in respect of Peninsular States *i.e.* Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu during Kharif 2008, upto 18.7.2008, 14.8.2008 and 17.10.2008 and for the corresponding period last year is indicated below:-

Status of sowing during Kharif 2008 (upto 18.7.2008)

(Lakh ha.)

Crop	Andhra Pradesh		Karnataka		Kerala		Maharashtra		Tamil Nadu	
	2008	2007	2008	2007	2008	2007	2008	2007	2008	2007
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Rice	1.56	1.89	2.12	2.36	0.81	0.84	3.91	3.43	1.12	0.63
Jowar	0.34	1.34	1.92	2.82	0.00	0.00	1.88	8.47	0.39	0.28

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Bajra	0.12	0.32	0.56	3.20	0.00	0.00	0.20	7.10	0.05	0.07
Maize	1.93	4.01	4.74	7.65	0.00	0.00	0.67	3.78	0.07	0.03
Coarse cereals	2.71	5.29	7.61	14.74	-	-	2.96	19.68	0.55	0.42
Pulses	3.00	4.48	4.12	8.36	0.00	0.01	9.17	17.58	0.38	0.00
Oilseeds	3.98	9.15	4.46	9.16	0.00	0.00	12.55	20.84	0.77	0.69
Cotton	5.92	8.68	1.46	1.57	0.00	0.00	17.09	26.19	0.10	0.06
Sugarcane	1.45	2.47	2.34	2.72	0.00	0.00	7.00	10.88	3.58	3.86

Status of sowing during Kharif 2008 (upto 14.8.2008)

(Lakh ha.)

Crop	Andhra Pradesh		Karnataka		Kerala		Maharashtra		Tamil Nadu	
	2008	2007	2008	2007	2008	2007	2008	2007	2008	2007
Rice	9.96	11.32	5.43	4.95	0.81	0.84	10.86	12.75	2.29	1.57
Jowar	0.94	1.52	2.16	2.99	-	-	8.47	12.15	0.62	0.39
Bajra	0.22	0.58	1.04	3.86	-	-	5.33	12.10	0.12	0.13
Maize	3.76	5.34	6.90	9.78	0.00	0.00	4.21	6.00	0.41	0.17
Coarse cereals	5.50	8.12	14.62	21.72	0.00	0.00	19.52	31.87	1.29	0.90
Pulses	6.11	7.55	7.72	13.03	0.00	0.01	16.67	25.56	1.32	0.68
Oilseeds	16.97	18.90	10.65	14.04	0.00	0.00	30.87	31.15	2.44	2.34
Cotton	12.73	10.53	1.98	2.05	0.00	0.00	29.01	31.62	0.13	0.11
Sugarcane	1.30	2.47	2.41	2.94	0.00	0.00	7.89	10.88	3.58	3.86

Status of sowing during Kharif 2008 (upto 17.10.2008)

(Lakh ha.)

Crop	Andhra Pradesh		Karnataka		Kerala		Maharashtra		Tamil Nadu	
	2008	2007	2008	2007	2008	2007	2008	2007	2008	2007
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Rice	25.26	23.16	10.66	10.55	0.89	1.06	15.02	15.24	5.74	5.73
Jowar	1.32	1.56	2.30	3.04	-	-	9.33	12.24	1.91	1.99
Bajra	0.45	0.63	2.13	3.97	-	-	8.77	12.21	0.77	0.28
Maize	5.14	5.59	9.46	10.88	-	-	5.56	6.09	1.41	1.28

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Coarse cereals	7.69	8.54	22.80	26.24	0.00	0.00	25.63	32.44	4.90	2.99
Pulses	7.16	10.86	10.85	14.93	0.00	0.01	18.26	26.68	1.32	1.83
Oilseeds	19.15	20.51	13.85	15.41	0.00	0.00	35.31	31.96	4.66	4.47
Cotton	13.19	10.79	2.85	2.34	0.00	0.00	31.33	31.91	0.22	0.36
Sugarcane	1.33	2.47	2.41	2.94	0.00	0.00	7.89	10.88	3.58	3.86

It will be seen that the sowing in the Peninsular States which was slow during the initial period of South-West Monsoon has shown improvement during the subsequent period.

In the Peninsular India, except for the Government of Karnataka, which has declared drought in 84 taluks in 21 districts, no other State Government has intimated about declaration of drought, due to deficit rainfall during South-West Monsoon this year. The Government of Karnataka has ready availability of funds in its Calamity Relief Fund (CRF) for taking immediate measures in the wake of natural calamities including drought. In response to the Memorandum submitted by the Government of Karnataka seeking Central assistance for drought relief, an Inter-Ministerial Central Team was constituted and the Team visited the State from 15th to 18th October, 2008 for assessment of the drought situation and requirements of Central assistance.

Suicides by farmers despite the packages

*108. SHRI MOINUL HASSAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of Government has been drawn to the CAG report on "Farmers Packages" in Maharashtra and the performance audit the Government of Maharashtra presented to the Assembly;

(b) whether Government is aware that the CAG report says, "No evaluation of the implementation of the packages, in terms of reduction in agrarian distress, was made";

(c) if so, the reaction of Government thereto; and

(d) despite the State Government's Rs. 1075 crore "package" for farmers and after the Prime Minister's visit in mid 2006 and the Central Government's Rs. 3750 crore package, how the incidents of suicides continued unabated?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) and (b) The Government of Maharashtra has confirmed the facts stated in part (a) and (b) of the question.

(c) The Government of Maharashtra appointed a one man committee under the Chairmanship of Dr. Narendra Jadhav, Vice-Chancellor, University of Pune in November, 2007 to carry out evaluation of the special rehabilitation package of the Government of India and the Government of Maharashtra for mitigating distress of farmers in the identified suicide prone districts of Maharashtra. The Committee has submitted its report to the Government of Maharashtra in July, 2008 and has concluded that the speed of implementation and achievements made in both the packages are satisfactory.